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SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT - MAY 21, 2008

Classified By: DCM Richard G. Olson, Jr. for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (S/NF) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- Afghanistan: The SYG noted that a draft report by UN Human Rights Rapporteur Alston was critical of international forces and ISAF in Afghanistan, but NATO was providing Alston with more information to make the final report more balanced. The SHAPE Operational update noted negotiations between the government of Pakistan and militants could result in the FATA becoming a new sanctuary for Opposing Militant Forces (OMF). The last week had been the most active of the year for ISAF, primarily due to the activities of the 24th MEU in Helmand Province. Recent coordinated rocket attacks on three airfields did not represent a new OMF capability and caused limited damage. Several PermReps, led by Canada, urged greater political and military engagement with Pakistan and suggested the SYG visit Pakistan soon. The SYG announced that D/ASYG Pardew will travel to Pakistan in two weeks.

-- Balkans: The SYG said he hoped to reschedule his meeting with the UN SYG, which had been canceled when UNSYG Ban traveled to Burma. NATO military authorities briefed the NAC on the status of UNMIK police forces.

-- Africa - Support to the AU: Ambassador Nuland asked for more information on the AU request to NATO to provide airlift for the Burundi AU peacekeeping battalion to Somalia. She urged any nation responding to the request to do so through NATO.

-- Iraq: No discussion.

-- Response to Terrorism: Outgoing Commander of Operation Active Endeavor (OAE) Vice Admiral Cesaretti (Italy) briefed

on the OAE Article 5 operation in the Mediterranean, which is expanding network-centric capabilities to decrease permanently deployed units.

-- Statements on Political Subjects: Ambassador Nuland shared additional U.S. information on Russian military activity related to Georgia.

-- AOB: No discussion.

END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

¶2. (C/NF) The SYG noted that a draft report of UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Philip Alston was critical of international forces and ISAF in Afghanistan. NATO has publicly rebutted this report. Alston's final report will be produced in two months; the SYG said NATO would work with Alston to make the final report more balanced and fair.

¶3. (C/NF) The SYG said he will attend the Afghanistan Support Conference in Paris on June 12.

¶4. (C/NF) The SYG reported the ISAF Spring Periodic Mission Review (PMR) is out and the Policy Coordination Group (PCG)

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will discuss it with the goal of having it approved by the NAC before the NATO Defense Ministerial in June. He said he will also provide Defense Ministers with an update on the implementation of the Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan (CSPMP) for Afghanistan approved at the Bucharest Summit.

¶5. (C/NF) Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee (D/CMC) General Eikenberry reported on last week's meeting of NATO and ISAF Chiefs of Defense (CHODs), who confirmed the importance of filling ISAF shortfalls and noted that national caveats hamper ISAF efforts. The International Military Staff (IMS) will forward SHAPE's most recent report on caveats, noting COMISAF's particular concern about geographical caveats. The D/CMC noted that the ANA is increasingly effective, but is limited by the shortfall in Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs). He said the last two ANA battalions to complete training are without mentoring teams.

¶6. (C/NF) IMS Assistant Director for Operations Major General Li Gobbi provided the SHAPE Operational Update, commenting that the Pakistan military is adjusting its positions in South Waziristan and exchanging POWs with the Taliban. There are localized peace agreements in the Pakistan border areas, and the FATA may now become a new sanctuary for the Taliban.

¶7. (C/NF) MG Li Gobbi reported there were simultaneous rocket attacks on the airfields in Herat, Kabul and Kandahar, which were apparently coordinated but caused no real damage and had only limited operational impact. COMISAF is concerned about the repeated attacks on helicopters as a new trend in Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) activity. With the poppy harvest ending, fighters who were working in the fields will soon become available, and the OMF and criminal organizations will seek to keep their smuggling routes open, which may lead to increased contacts with ISAF and the ANA. This week has been the most active of the year for ISAF, mostly because of the activities of the 24th MEU in Helmand. In RC-Capital there is infighting among OMF factions in Sarobi district. In RC-North, there is a concern about linkages between OMF and local criminals. In RC-West, OMF activities have focused on Farah province, and may increase as OMF seek to keep their drug smuggling routes open to Iran and Turkmenistan. In RC-South, there is an increase in OMF activity, particularly

in Helmand in the Musa Qala area. The 24th MEU in Garmsir district is seriously disrupting OMF and the ANA will establish a permanent post in the area. This activity has caused the temporary displacement of about 3,000-4,000 local civilians. In RC-East, there is a growing concern about infiltration of fighters from Pakistan and ISAF will focus on interdiction.

¶18. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland reported on U.S. public statements critical of the Pakistani government's dealing with militants and asked Allies to remind the Pakistanis that a similar deal with militants failed last year.

¶19. (C/NF) In response to questions from PermReps, Li Gobbi said the coordinated attacks on the airfields did not represent a new enemy capability and could have been arranged by a simple phone call. The attacks did not disrupt ISAF operations, but the underlying notion of greater cooperation among regional OMF leaders would be monitored. He also said

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that despite recent attacks on ISAF helicopters, the long-term trend of such attacks was unchanged. In two recent attacks, light weapons were used and neither helicopter was seriously damaged.

¶10. (C/NF) Canadian PermRep McRae asked for more details about the concept of "partnering" with ANA units and commented that more needs to be done to address border issues, since the Tri-Partite Commission is reportedly dysfunctional. He urged (supported by Belgium, Turkey and others) finding a new mechanism for political and military engagement with Pakistan that brought in regional and local actors. He also urged the SYG to visit Pakistan soon and to invite Afghan FM Spanta to brief the NAC. General Eikenberry noted that "partnering" is distinct from providing OMLTs. OMLTs are for newly-trained ANA units, but over time ANA units become more proficient and rely less on OMLTs, and benefit more from "partnering" with ISAF units. Ambassador Nuland added that the U.S. has taken this approach in RC-East, but it is made possible by the longer (12-15 month) tours of U.S. combat units. Partnering also allows the OMLTs to shrink over time until they are only providing key enablers.

¶11. (C/NF) Norwegian PermRep Traavik asked about the status of ANSF assuming security responsibility for Kabul and General Eikenberry responded that SACEUR will issue a report by the end of May.

¶12. (C/NF) UK PermRep Eldon welcomed the CHODs' commitment to lift caveats, but General Eikenberry responded that while the CHODs agreed caveats were detrimental to the ISAF operation, only capitals could lift them. Eldon urged that the International Staff brief the NAC periodically on political developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Eldon also commented on the food shortages and price rises in Afghanistan, adding that the UK has contributed 3 million Pounds in assistance.

¶13. (C/NF) The SYG noted that the Afghan-Pakistan border is a real concern. NATO's engagement should be within the context of cooperation with other international actors, including UN SRSG Kai Eide. He added that D/ASYG Pardew will travel to Pakistan in two weeks and the SYG may then make his own visit when he is sure he has Pakistani interlocutors in place. The SYG stated that the June Defense Ministerial could usefully review the status of the Tri-Partite Commission, and that he will prepare an update on implementation of the CSPMP. The Turkish PermRep offered to provide a briefing on Pakistan by the Turkish Ambassador in Islamabad.

Balkans

¶14. (C/NF) The SYG announced that his planned May 21 meeting with UNSYG Ban to discuss Kosovo had been postponed due to Ban's decision to visit Burma. The SYG said he hoped the meeting would be rescheduled for next week. The D/CMC gave a readout of last week's meeting of NATO CHODs, in which they reaffirmed NATO's commitment to Kosovo, but expressed concern over the uncertainty regarding the UNMIK transition to EULEX after the new Kosovo constitution takes effect on June 15. The CHODs also endorsed prudent planning for all scenarios,

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including worst case scenarios that might necessitate adjustments to KFOR's force posture. The D/CMC also updated the Council on the status of Revision 3 of the Balkans OPLAN, saying that the Military Committee would meet Thursday, May 22, to discuss the 130 comments that nations have provided. He noted approximately 30 of the comments were political in nature. The UK PermRep stressed the importance of having an agreed or almost agreed Balkans OPLAN by the June Defense Ministerial. He then asked for a timetable for completing the OPLAN and suggested NATO political authorities should begin work to resolve some of the political issues. The SYG agreed with the UK on the need for having either a fully agreed or almost agreed OPLAN for the ministerial. He urged the Military Committee not to get bogged down in political issues that should be left to the NAC to decide and said he would discuss the issue with the Chairman of the Military Committee.

¶15. (C/NF) MG Li Gobbi provided the operational update on Kosovo, reporting that Kosovo remains generally calm, but that should Kosovo Serbs establish parallel governmental structures in the wake of the May 11 elections, Kosovo Albanians may respond violently. MG Li Gobbi said the UK's operational reserve battalion would be ready in theater by May 31, replacing the German battalion that is there now. In response to an earlier request, MG Li Gobbi also provided information on the strength of UNMIK's police force, saying that currently there are approximately 1,917 UNMIK police serving in Kosovo. Of these, 420 personnel were deployed north of the Ibar River, of which 220 are in formed police units (riot control). He said that the figures represent slightly more than what the EULEX mission is planning to deploy to Kosovo.

¶16. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland, citing her meeting with UNMIK Deputy SRSG Rossin, noted the importance that the UN was placing on soliciting offers of formed police units from European countries as part of the transition to EULEX. She also announced that President Bush has nominated current Charge d'Affaires Tina Kaidanow as Ambassador to Kosovo.

Africa - Support to the AU

¶17. (C/NF) Ambassador Nuland asked the SYG to confirm that NATO had received a request from the African Union (AU) for airlift of the Burundi AU peacekeeping battalion to Somalia. The SYG promised to get back with a response. She also requested that Allies who decide to meet this request do so through NATO.

Response to Terrorism

¶18. (C/NF) Outgoing Commander of Operation Active Endeavor (OAE) Vice Admiral Cesaretti (Italy) briefed on the OAE Article 5 operation in the Mediterranean. He said that on an average day NATO tracks 27 "Vessels of Collection Interest" and has a complete picture of 45 percent of the Mediterranean, mostly on the Northern Coast. The successes of OAE are being incorporated into the revised NATO Maritime Security Awareness concept, which has been approved by the

NAC. OAE is expanding network-centric capabilities to decrease the need for permanently deployed naval units, serving as a prime example of NATO's transformation. The operation also serves as a model for NATO partnerships, with 46 nations participating (Libya recently requested a formal arrangement for information sharing). In response to a query from Ambassador Nuland, the Commander praised the cooperation with partners and the usefulness of their contributions. Spain's PermRep later dampened the Commander's praise somewhat, stating he did not think coordination between nations involved in OAE is perfect. Overall, PermReps expressed strong support to OAE. The Italian PermRep labeled OAE the maritime equivalent of missile defense, noting the operation is also a useful proving ground for future NATO members to participate in an ongoing, successful NATO operation.

Statements on Political Subjects

¶19. (C/NF) Statements on Political Subjects: Ambassador Nuland informed Allies that the President will travel to Europe from June 9-16 to participate in the U.S.-EU Summit in Slovenia and to visit Germany, Italy, the Holy See, France, and the UK.

¶20. (S/NF) Following through on her commitment at the May 14 NAC, Ambassador Nuland shared additional U.S. information on Russian military activity related to Georgia. She relayed U.S. assessments of the recent shooting down of several Georgian UAVs and described Russian reinforcement of the CIS peacekeeping force in Abkhazia.
NULAND